

Appendix A

**Notice of Intent,
Notice of Preparation,
Comments**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service****Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit Associated With a Habitat Conservation Plan for Pacific Gas & Electric Company's Operation and Maintenance Activities in the San Joaquin Valley, California**

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Fish and Wildlife Service (we, the Service) advises the public that we intend to gather information necessary to prepare, in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) on the PG&E San Joaquin Valley Operation and Maintenance Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan). The Plan is being prepared under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, (Act). PG&E intends to request a permit for 31 species federally listed as threatened or endangered and 36 unlisted species that may become listed during the term of the permit. The permit is needed to authorize take of listed species that could occur as a result of implementation activities covered under the Plan.

The Service provides this notice to: (1) Describe the proposed action and possible alternatives; (2) advise other Federal and State agencies, affected Tribes, and the public of our intent to prepare an EIS/EIR; (3) announce the initiation of a public scoping period; and (4) obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues and alternatives to be included in the EIS/EIR.

DATES: Public meetings will be held on: Tuesday, April 6, 2004, from 4 PM to 7 PM, and on Wednesday, April 7, 2004, from 4 PM to 7 PM. Written comments should be received on or before April 26, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting on Tuesday, April 6, 2004 will be held at Siefert Community Center, Room 2, 128 West Benjamin Holt drive, Stockton, CA, (209) 937-7350, and the public meeting on Wednesday, April 7, 2004 will be held at Mosqueda Community Center, Room 6, 4670 East Butler Avenue, Fresno, CA (559) 621-6600. Information, written comments, or questions related to the preparation of

the EIS/EIR and NEPA process should be submitted to Lori Rinek, Chief, Conservation Planning and Recovery Division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, 2800 Cottage Way, W-2605, Sacramento, California 95825; FAX (916) 414-6713.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Craig Aubrey, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, or Lori Rinek, Chief, Conservation Planning and Recovery Division at the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office at (916) 414-6600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Reasonable Accommodation**

Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the public meeting should contact Lori Rinek at (916) 414-6600 as soon as possible. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please call no later than one week before the public meeting. Information regarding this proposed action is available in alternative formats upon request.

Background

Section 9 of the Act and Federal regulations prohibit the "take" of a fish and wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened. Under the Act, the following activities are defined as take: harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect listed animal species, or attempt to engage in such conduct (16 U.S.C. 1538). However, under section 10(a) of the Act, we may issue permits to authorize "incidental take" of listed species. "Incidental take" is defined by the Act as take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, carrying out an otherwise lawful activity. Regulations governing permits for threatened species and endangered species, respectively, are at 50 CFR 17.32 and 50 CFR 17.22.

Take of listed plant species is not prohibited under the Act and cannot be authorized under a section 10 permit. We propose to include plant species on the permit in recognition of the conservation benefits provided for them under the Plan. These species would also receive no surprises assurances under the Service's "No Surprises" regulation (63 FR 8859).

Currently, PG&E intends to request a permit for 67 species (covered species) under the Plan: 31 listed and 36 unlisted species. These include the federally listed endangered vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*), blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia sila*), Tipton kangaroo rat

(*Dipodomys nitratoideus nitratoideus*), giant kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ingens*), Buena Vista Lake shrew (*Sorex ornatus relictus*), riparian woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes riparia*), riparian brush rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmani riparius*), San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), large-flowered fiddleneck (*Amsinckia grandiflora*), California jewelflower (*Caulanthus californicus*), palmate-bracted bird's beak (*Cordylanthus palmatus*), Kern mallow (*Eremalche kernensis*), San Joaquin woolly-threads (*Monolopia congdonii*), Bakersfield cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *treleasei*), hairy orcutt grass (*Orcuttia pilosa*), Hartweg's golden sunburst (*Pseudobahia bahiifolia*), Greene's tuctoria (*Tuctoria greenei*), Keck's checkermallow (*Sidalcea keckii*), and the threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), mariposa pussypaws (*Calyptridium pulchellum*), succulent owl's clover (*Castilleja campestris* ssp. *succulenta*), Hoover's spurge (*Chamaesyce hooveri*), Hoover's erastrium (*Erastrum hooverii*), Springville clarkia (*Clarkia springvillensis*), Colusa grass (*Neostapfia colusana*), San Joaquin Valley orcutt grass (*Orcuttia inaequalis*), San Joaquin adobe sunburst (*Pseudobahia peirsonii*), and their habitats.

The 36 unlisted species proposed to be covered under the Plan include: midvalley fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta mesovallensis*), California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), limestone salamander (*Hydromantes brunus*), California black rail (*Lateralis jamaicensis coturniculus*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), white-tailed kite (*Elanus caeruleus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), greater sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*), western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*), bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*), lesser saltscall (*Atriplex minuscula*), Bakersfield smallscale (*Atriplex tularensis*), big tarplant (*Blepharizonia plumosa* ssp. *plumosa*), tree-anemone (*Carpenteria californica*), slough thistle (*Cirsium crassicaule*), Mariposa clarkia (*Clarkia biloba* ssp. *australis*), Merced clarkia (*Clarkia lingulata*), Vasek's clarkia (*Clarkia tembloriensis* ssp. *calientensis*), hispid bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus mollis* ssp. *Hispidus*), Congdon's woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum congdonii*), delta button-

celery (*Eryngium racemosum*), striped adobe-lily (= Greenhorn) (*Fritillaria striata*), Bogg's Lake hedge-hyssop (*Gratiola heterosepala*), pale-yellow layia (*Layia heterotricha*), Comanche layia (*Layia leucopappa*), legenere (*Legenere limosa*), Congdon's lewisia (*Lewisia congdonii*), Mason's lilaeopsis (*Lilaeopsis masonii*), Mariposa lupine (*Lupinus citrinus* var. *deflexus*), showy madia (*Madia radiata*), Hall's bush mallow (*Malacothamnus hallii*), pincushion navarretia (*Navarretia myersii* spp. *myersii*), oil neststraw (*Stylocline citroleum*), and Jared's pepper grass (*Lepidium jaredii* ssp. *jaredii*). Species may be added or deleted during the course of Plan development based on further analysis, new information, agency consultation, and public comment.

The Plan area includes the network of PG&E facilities within approximately 12,094,000 acres of the San Joaquin Valley. The Plan area comprises portions of nine counties: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, Kern, Mariposa, Madera, and Tulare. The boundaries of the Plan area are generally defined by the north and eastern boundaries of San Joaquin and Stanislaus County lines, until reaching Mariposa County where it follows the 3,000-foot elevation contour or Federal lands, whichever is lower, south along the western Sierra Nevada foothills. On the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, the plan boundary follows the western boundary of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, and Kern Counties. The southern limit of the plan area boundary is the 3,000-foot elevation contour near the Kern County line.

Implementation activities that may be covered under the Plan include activities associated with the operation, maintenance, and minor construction of PG&E's gas and electric transmission and distribution system as mandated for public safety by the California Public Utilities Commission, the California Energy Commission, and the Department of Transportation. More specifically, these activities may include: gas pipeline protection, recoating, repair and replacement; electric line protection, repair, reconductering, and replacement; electric pole repair/replacement; vegetation management to maintain clearances around facilities; and minor new gas and electric extensions. Under the Plan, the effects on covered species of the covered activities are expected to be minimized and mitigated through participation in a conservation program, which will be fully described in the Plan. This conservation program would

focus on providing long-term protection of covered species by protecting biological communities in the Plan area.

Components of this conservation program are now under consideration by the Service and PG&E. These components will likely include: avoidance and minimization measures, monitoring, adaptive management, and mitigation measures consisting of preservation, restoration and enhancement of habitat.

Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report

PG&E and the Service have selected Jones & Stokes to prepare the Draft EIS/EIR. The joint document will be prepared in compliance with NEPA and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Although Jones & Stokes will prepare the EIS/EIR, the Service will be responsible for the scope and content of the document for NEPA purposes, and DFG will be responsible for the scope and content of the CEQA document, as the state lead agency pursuant to CEQA and the permitting entity pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act and Fish and Game Code 2081.

The EIS/EIR will consider the proposed action (*i.e.*, the issuance of a Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit under the Act), and a reasonable range of alternatives. A detailed description of the proposed action and alternatives will be included in the EIS/EIR. It is anticipated that several alternatives will be developed, which may vary by the level of conservation, impacts caused by the proposed activities, permit area, covered species, or a combination of these factors. Additionally, a No Action alternative will be considered. Under the No Action alternative, the Service would not issue a section 10(a)(1)(B) permit.

The EIS/EIR will also identify potentially significant impacts on biological resources, land use, air quality, water quality, mineral resources, water resources, economics, and other environmental issues that could occur directly or indirectly with implementation of the proposed action and alternatives. For all potentially significant impacts, the EIS/EIR will identify mitigation measures where feasible to reduce these impacts to a level below significance.

Environmental review of the EIS/EIR will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), its implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508), other applicable regulations, and Service procedures for compliance with those regulations. This notice is being

furnished in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.7 of NEPA to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and the public on the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIS/EIR. The primary purpose of the scoping process is to identify important issues raised by the public, related to the proposed action. Written comments from interested parties are invited to ensure that the full range of issues related to the permit request are identified. While written comments are encouraged, we will accept both written and oral comments at the public meeting. In addition, you may submit written comments by mail or facsimile transmission (see **ADDRESSES**). All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public.

Dated: March 17, 2004.

Ken McDermond,

Deputy Manager, Region 1, California/Nevada Operations Office, Sacramento, California.

[FR Doc. 04–6664 Filed 3–24–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA–310–0777–XG]

Notice of Public Meeting: Northwest California Resource Advisory Council

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Northwest California Resource Advisory Council will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The meeting will be held Thursday, May 6 and Friday, May 7, 2004, in Redding, California. On May 6, the meeting begins at 10 a.m. at the BLM Redding Field Office, 355 Hemsted Drive. Members will depart for a field tour of public lands in the Sacramento River Bend Area. On May 7, the meeting begins at 8 a.m. at the McConnell Foundation headquarters, 800 Shasta View Drive in Redding. Time for public comment has been set aside for 1 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Francis Berg, BLM Redding Field Office, 355 Hemsted Dr., (530) 224–2100; or BLM Public Affairs Officer Joseph J. Fontana, (530) 252–5332.

DATE: April 5, 2004

SUBJECT

Notice of Preparation (NOP) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Issuance of Incidental Take Permits Associated with a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), and a Programmatic Streambed Alteration Agreement for Pacific Gas and Electric's (PG&E) San Joaquin Valley Operation and Maintenance (O&M) activities in the San Joaquin Valley, California.

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) plan to prepare an EIS/EIR on the PG&E San Joaquin Valley O&M HCP (Plan). PG&E is an investor-owned electric and gas utility company, serving more than 4.8 million electricity customers and 4 million natural gas customers throughout California.

The Plan is being prepared under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Section 2081(b) of the California Fish and Game Code. The Plan area includes the network of PG&E facilities within portions of nine counties throughout San Joaquin Valley. PG&E intends to request permits for 67 species listed as threatened or endangered or that may become listed during the term of the permit. The permit is needed to authorize take of listed species that could occur as a result of implementation activities covered under the Plan (see Proposed Implementation Activities below).

PG&E SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

Covered Species

Currently, 67 species are proposed for coverage under the Plan. Table 1 lists wildlife species and their current status; Table 2 lists plant species and their current status. Species may be added or deleted during the course of Plan development based on further analysis, new information, agency consultation, and public comment.

Plan Area

The Plan area includes the network of PG&E facilities within approximately 12,094,000 acres of the San Joaquin Valley. The Plan area comprises portions of nine counties: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, Kern, Mariposa, Madera, and Tulare. The boundaries of the Plan area are generally defined by the north and eastern boundaries of San Joaquin and Stanislaus county lines, until reaching Mariposa County where it follows the 3,000-foot elevation contour or Federal lands, whichever is lower, south along the western Sierra Nevada foothills. On the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, the Plan boundary follows the western boundary of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, and Kern counties. The southern limit of the Plan area boundary is the 3,000-foot elevation contour near the Kern County line.

Proposed Implementation Activities

Implementation activities that may be covered under the Plan include activities associated with operation, maintenance, and minor construction of PG&E's gas and electric transmission and distribution system as mandated for public safety by the California Public Utilities Commission, the California Energy Commission, and the Department of Transportation. More specifically, these activities may include: gas pipeline protection, recoating, repair and replacement; electric line protection, repair, reconductering, and replacement; electric pole repair/replacement; vegetation management to maintain clearances around facilities; and minor new gas and electric extensions.

Mitigation

Under the Plan, the effects on covered species of the covered activities are expected to be minimized and mitigated through participation in a conservation program, which will be fully described in the Plan. The conservation program would focus on providing long-term protection of covered species by protecting biological communities in the Plan area.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/REPORT

The Service and DFG will prepare a joint document in compliance with CEQA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). DFG will be responsible for the scope and content of the document for CEQA purposes, and the Service will be responsible for the scope and content of the document for NEPA purposes.

The EIS/EIR will consider the proposed action (issuance of take permits), and a reasonable range of alternatives. A detailed description of the proposed action and alternatives will be included in the EIS/EIR. It is anticipated that several alternatives will be developed, which may vary by the level of conservation, impacts caused by the proposed activities, permit area, covered species, or a combination of these factors.

The EIS/EIR will also identify potentially significant impacts on biological resources, air quality, water quality, noise, cultural resources, and other environmental issues that could occur directly or indirectly with implementation of the proposed action and alternatives. For all potentially significant impacts, the EIS/EIR will identify mitigation measures where feasible to reduce these impacts to a level below significance.

PUBLIC MEETING

Two public meetings have been scheduled to provide an overview of the proposed action and obtain feedback. The meetings will be held on the following dates at the following locations:

Tuesday, April 6, 2004
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Siefert Community Center
Room 2
128 West Benjamin Holt Drive
Stockton, CA
(209) 937-7350

Wednesday, April 7, 2004
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Mosqueda Community Center
Room 6
4670 East Butler Avenue
Fresno, CA
(559) 621-6600

SUBMITTING COMMENTS

Written comments from interested parties are invited to ensure that the full range of issues related to the proposed action are identified. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public. Information, written comments, or questions related to the preparation of the EIS/EIR should be received on or before May 3, 2004. Written comments should be directed to the contact below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Scott Flint
California Department of Fish and Game
1416 9th Street – Room 1280
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone: (916) 653-9719
E-mail: sflint@dfg.ca.gov

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the public meeting should contact Scott Flint at (916) 653-9719 as soon as possible. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please call no later than one week before the public meeting. Information regarding this proposed action is available in alternative formats upon request.

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MAY 03 2004

SACRAMENTO FISH
& WILDLIFE OFFICE



CALIFORNIA AND PACIFIC OFFICE

*protecting endangered species and wild places through
science, education, policy, and environmental law*

VIA FACSIMILE AND U.S. MAIL

April 30, 2004

Lori Rinek, Chief, Conservation
Planning and Recovery Division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way, W-2605,
Sacramento, California 95825
FAX (916) 414-6713

Re: Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit Associated With a Habitat Conservation Plan for Pacific Gas & Electric Company's Operation and Maintenance Activities in the San Joaquin Valley, California

Dear Ms. Rinek:

The Center for Biological Diversity ("the Center") submits the following comments on the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit Associated With a Habitat Conservation Plan for Pacific Gas & Electric Company's Operation and Maintenance Activities in the San Joaquin Valley, California (hereinafter "the Project" or "Proposed PG&E HCP").

The Center is a non-profit, public interest environmental organization dedicated to the protection of native species and their habitats through science, policy, and environmental law. The Center has over 9,000 members throughout California and the western United States, including in Los Angeles, Kern, and Ventura counties and other areas that the Project would impact.

Currently, PG&E intends to request a permit for 67 species (covered species) under the Plan: 31 listed and 36 unlisted species. These include the federally listed endangered vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*), blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia sila*), Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratoideus nitratoideus*), giant kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ingens*), Buena Vista Lake shrew (*Sorex ornatus relictus*), riparian woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes riparia*), riparian brush rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmani riparius*), San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), large-flowered fiddleneck (*Amsinckia grandiflora*), California jewelflower (*Caulanthus californicus*), palmate-bracted bird's beak (*Cordylanthus palmatus*), Kern mallow

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Kassie Siegel, Staff Attorney
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Email: ksiegel@biologicaldiversity.org • www.biologicaldiversity.org

(*Eremalche kernensis*), San Joaquin woolly-threads (*Monolopia congdonii*), Bakersfield cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *treleasei*), hairy orcutt grass (*Orcuttia pilosa*), Hartweg's golden sunburst (*Pseudobahia bahiifolia*), Greene's tuctoria (*Tuctoria greenei*), Keck's checkermallow (*Sidalcea keckii*), and the threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), mariposa pussypaws (*Calyptridium pulchellum*), succulent owl's clover (*Castilleja campestris* ssp. *succulenta*), Hoover's spurge (*Chamaesyce hooveri*), Hoover's erastrium (*Erastrium hooverii*), Springville clarkia (*Clarkia springvillensis*), Colusa grass (*Neostapfia colusana*), San Joaquin Valley orcutt grass (*Orcuttia inaequalis*), San Joaquin adobe sunburst (*Pseudobahia peirsonii*), and their habitats.

The 36 unlisted species proposed to be covered under the Plan include: midvalley fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta mesovallensis*), California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), limestone salamander (*Hydromantes brunus*), California black rail (*Lateralis jamaicensis coturniculus*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), white-tailed kite (*Elanus caeruleus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), greater sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*), western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*), bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*), lesser saltscale (*Atriplex minuscula*), Bakersfield smallscale (*Atriplex tularensis*), big tarplant (*Blepharizonia plumosa* spp. *plumosa*), tree-anemone (*Carpenteria californica*), slough thistle (*Cirsium crassicaule*), Mariposa clarkia (*Clarkia biloba* ssp. *australis*), Merced clarkia (*Clarkia lingulata*), Vasek's clarkia (*Clarkia tembloriensis* ssp. *calientensis*), hispid bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus mollis* ssp. *Hispidus*), Congdon's woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum congdonii*), delta button-celery (*Eryngium racemosum*), striped adobe-lily (= Greenhorn) (*Fritillaria striata*), Bogg's Lake hedge-hyssop (*Gratiola heterosepala*), pale-yellow layia (*Layia heterotricha*), Comanche layia (*Layia leucopappa*), legenere (*Legenere limosa*), Congdon's lewisia (*Lewisia congdonii*), Mason's lilaeopsis (*Lilaeopsis masonii*), Mariposa lupine (*Lupinus citrinus* var. *deflexus*), showy madia (*Madia radiata*), Hall's bush mallow (*Malacothamnus hallii*), pincushion navarretia (*Navarretia myersii* spp. *myersii*), oil neststraw (*Stylocline citroleum*), and Jared's pepper grass (*Lepidium jaredii* ssp. *jaredii*).

The Plan area includes the network of PG&E facilities within approximately 12,094,000 acres of the San Joaquin Valley. The Plan area comprises portions of nine counties: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, Kern, Mariposa, Madera, and Tulare. The boundaries of the Plan area are generally defined by the north and eastern boundaries of San Joaquin and Stanislaus County lines, until reaching Mariposa County where it follows the 3,000-foot elevation contour or Federal lands, whichever is lower, south along the western Sierra Nevada foothills. On the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, the plan boundary follows the western boundary of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, and Kern Counties. The southern limit of the plan area boundary is the 3,000-foot elevation contour near the Kern County line.

Implementation activities that may be covered under the Plan include activities associated with the operation, maintenance, and minor construction of PG&E's gas and electric transmission and distribution system as mandated for public safety by the California Public Utilities Commission, the California Energy Commission, and the Department of Transportation. More specifically, these activities may include: gas pipeline protection, recoating, repair and replacement; electric line protection, repair, reconductering, and replacement; electric pole

repair/replacement; vegetation management to maintain clearances around facilities; and minor new gas and electric extensions.

At over 12 million acres, the Proposed PG&E HCP may be geographically the largest HCP ever proposed. Similarly, the list of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species is extremely long. The Center has advocated for many of the proposed covered species which are being driven towards extinction by a number of factors including those proposed to be covered under the HCP. Because of its enormous significance, it is particularly important that the HCP scrupulously follow all statutory and regulatory guidelines. Please review recovery plans for each listed species to ensure that all components of the Proposed PG&E HCP are consistent with applicable recovery plans.

The Center looks forward to reviewing the Draft EIR/EIS and HCP. Please add this office to your mailing list for all future correspondence (Center for Biological Diversity, P.O. Box 493, Idyllwild, CA 92549, Attn: Kassie Siegel). Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kassie Siegel".

Kassie Siegel

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